

P.O.Box 71, PC 16/574/4/86
Hilton,
3245.

15th November, 1987.

The Editor,
The Natal Witness,
Pietermaritzburg.

Sir,

One must protest even more strongly against last week's detention of Mr. Ngwenya and Mr. Wittenberg, and those supporters of the UDF detained with them, than one does against the whole process of detention in general.

The black areas around Pietermaritzburg have been in the grip of a murderous and escalating cycle of political violence for many months. During the past weeks it has seemed, at last, as if the various contestants might be drawing closer to a mutual recognition that it simply had to stop. There was a faint sense of hope in the air, although things were obviously at a very sensitive and delicate stage.

Into this fragile situation now step the Security Police to detain two of the UDF's principal negotiators and a group of people on whose behalf they were apparently hoping to negotiate.

To somebody who has watched with growing horror the shattering of the cohesion of one black local community after another, by the actions of a variety of political gangsters, and who hoped that peace might now be on the way, this seems to be an act of complete madness.

Shimbuza Ngwenya and Martin Wittenberg and the others must be released at once so that they can get on with what the Security Police have now very effectively put a stop to -- the search for peace in Pietermaritzburg.

They should never have been detained in the first place.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Brown
Peter Brown.